DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 759 SO 018 372

TITLE	Celebrating the Constitution: An Interdisciplinary Approach.
INSTITUTION	Hampton City Schools, VA.
PUB DATE	Mar 87
NOTE	21p.; Prepared by the Faculty of Bethel High School, Hampton, VA. Paper presented at the Southeast Regional Social Studies Conference (Savannah, GA, March 26-28, 1987).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Activities; *Constitutional History; Course Content; High Schools; *Integrated Activities; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Program Content; Program Descriptions; Program Guides; Secondary School Curriculum; Special Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Bicentennial; *United States Constitution

ABSTRACT

Prepared as an effort to involve all high school subject areas in an interdisciplinary Bicentennial celebration, this booklet offers brief descriptions of ideas for projects, displays, lectures, programs, and classroom activities. Information and suggestions for developing and establishing a climate for learning and celebration and for specific school-wide activities are provided. A lecture series is proposed which encourages the participation of local journalists, judges, lawyers, activists, or college government professors. Specific projects are suggested for use in social studies, English, science, mathematics, home economics, art, music, foreign language, and military science classes. Activities for use with gifted students are listed, and sample questions which could be used in a Bicentennial celebration trivia contest are included. A selected bibliography of 18 books about the U.S. Constitution for use by students is appended. (JHP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Celebrating the Constitution: An Interdisciplinary Approach

ED288759

Prepared by the Faculty of
Bethel High School
Hampton, Virginia

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Thomas E. Bailey
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Official logo of the national Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, designed by Sarah LeClerc of the Institute of Heraldry of the Army

Presented to the SECSS by:
Mary Bicouvaris, Social Studies Teacher, Bethel High School
Dr. Betty Swiggett, English Supervisor of Hampton School System

PRESIDER:
Barbara Howard, Social Studies Teacher, Iroquois High School, Louisville, Kentucky

SO018372

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Celebrating the Constitution: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Prepared by the Faculty of
Bethel High School
Hampton, Virginia

Presented to the SECSS by:

Mary Bicouvaris, Social Studies Teacher, Bethel High School
Betty M. Swiggett, Ph.D., English Supervisor, Hampton School System

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Celebrating the Constitution in Your School	2
Setting the Tone for the Celebration of the Constitution in Your School	3
A Lecture Series Highlighting the Constitution	4
Projects for the Celebration of the Constitution	
Social Studies	5
Gifted Students	7
English	8
Science	9
Mathematics	10
Home Economics	11
Art	12
Music	13
Foreign Languages	14
ROTC	15
Celebrating the Constitution: Trivia Contest	16
National Bicentennial Writing Competition for High School Students	17
Notes	18

INTRODUCTION

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary," said James Madison in Federalist No. 51. As chief shaper of the Unites States Constitution, Madison was a realist, knowing the freedoms won by the American Revolution had to be preserved through a written document that would give unity and order to the government and freedom and justice to the citizens.

Now, two hundred years since its preparation and ratification, we celebrate the document that forms the cornerstone of our democratic system. We may celebrate in many ways. Celebration may be simple or elaborate, a quiet reading of the Constitution and Bill of Rights or a school and community festival. The Bicentennial offers us as school teachers the opportunity to unite across the disciplines to help students come to appreciate fully the basic liberties and rights that most Americans take for granted. It is a time to learn more about the founding fathers and the processes of governmental decision-making. It is a time to pay tribute to the document that is the foundation of our way of life.

This booklet takes an interdisciplinary approach to the Bicentennial Celebration. Ideas are presented that involve all school departments in the study and celebration. Descriptions are brief. The intent is to spark the reader's imagination, not give detailed lesson plans.

We hope that you will find this document useful for your own planning.

Mary Bicouvaris
Betty Swiggett

CELEBRATING THE CONSTITUTION IN YOUR SCHOOL

I. Form a Bicentennial Celebration Committee with members from all departments, including administration.

II. Select a plan for celebration appropriate for your school.

A. Conduct a multi-faceted celebration involving the entire faculty and student body.

1. Plan a Kick-off Day, Spring 1987. An assembly may be appropriate.

a. Speaker
b. Appropriate selections played by band
c. Appropriate selections sung by chorus
d. Announcements of competitions, awards, etc.
e. Announcement by each department of its plans for participation in the celebration

2. Various departments proceed at their own schedule and rate of involvement in the celebration.

3. Hold a Culmination Day, celebrating the day of the signing of the Constitution. Suggested date--September 17, 1987.

a. Song
b. Speeches
c. Announcement of award winners

B. Plan a week of celebration.

a. Kick-off Day (as in plan A)
b. Various activities scheduled during the week
c. Culmination Day (optional)

C. Plan a day of total immersion in the study and celebration of the Constitution.

D. Create your own plan.

Note: If your school system has a divisionwide focus on celebrating the Constitution, join in and select your dates to complement the division's schedule.

SETTING THE TONE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION IN YOUR SCHOOL

1. Make displays in all school showcases which reflect the theme of the Constitution.

2. Exhibit art work relative to the Constitution.

3. Decorate bulletin boards in all classes using the theme of the Constitution.

4. Design, make, and display a banner announcing the Celebration of the Constitution by the school (art and home economics departments).

5. Display student work relative to the theme of the Constitution.

6. Declare 1987 the Year of the Constitution. (Student government may do this.)

7. Give awards (by departments) to student Constitutional scholars. (Standards will vary.)

8. Learn and perform selections appropriate for the Celebration of the Constitution (band and chorus).

9. Hold contests (poetry, essays, debates, etc.) relative to the Constitution.

10. Write editorials in the school paper on the Constitution.

11. Select the theme of the Constitution for one of the PTA's regularly scheduled meeting.

12. Prepare 18th century menus for a day or a week (school cafeteria staff).

A LECTURE SERIES HIGHLIGHTING THE CONSTITUTION

Place: Your school library

Suggestions: A journalist from your local paper may speak on "Freedom of the Press."

A judge may speak about the Constitution and the courtroom.

A lawyer may speak about civil rights and liberties.

An activist for change may speak on Constitutional reform.

A local college government professor may speak on the issues relating to the Constitution.

Note: These lectures may be open to the public.

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Social Studies

1. Start a tradition of reading 5-10 minutes daily from the book A Miracle in Philadelphia.

   Use volunteers in each class taking turns to read. Aim to finish the story by the end of the school year. The reading stimulates discussion. (Bowen, Catherine Drinker. A Miracle in Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September 1987. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986.)

2. Organize a day-long lecture series by inviting community resource people to address either various questions regarding the Constitution or a single issue such as the first amendment rights. (Suggestions for people to be invited: a college government teacher, a lawyer, a journalist, a theologian, a policeman, a civil liberties activist)

3. Devote some time to the study of Landmark Supreme Court decisions defining our rights. (See: Senior Scholastic, Update, Volume 119, No. 1, September 8, 1986. The entire issue is a great resource.)

4. Keep interest in the Constitution alive throughout the school year in the social studies by addressing questions relating to the Constitution. For example:

   Topic: The Louisiana Purchase
   Question: Did Jefferson have the right to buy land for the U. S.?

   Topic: The President's Cabinet
   Question: Does the Constitution require the President to have a cabinet?

   Topic: The Vietnam War
   Question: What are the war powers of the President, the Congress?

5. Start each day with a trivia question about the Constitution. The students may answer it while you are taking roll.

6. Plan with other departments a day of "study-in" the Constitution. Begin the day with a dramatic reading of the preamble.

7. Have students draw cartoons as they hear Miracle in Philadelphia being read.

8. Have students complete the sentence, "If I were in Philadelphia as a delegate in 1787, I would . . . ." Discuss their reactions.

9. Plan a field trip to the National Archives to view the original documents.

10. Turn your class into a convention to evaluate your SCA's Constitution.

Social Studies Projects (continued)

11. Plan a Celebration of the Constitution involving the community, complete with student poems, essays, skits, and square dances by your local square dance society.

12. Make vocabulary lists from the Constitution (suitable for English assignment also).

13. Compare the United States Constitution with the constitution of another country.

14. Create a picture-quiz of famous personalities of 1787.

15. Assign students the reading of one or more biographies of those who shaped the Constitution.

    a. Student can then create a brief profile of each for bulletin board display.
    b. Students, particularly the more advanced ones, can compare the different perspectives that two biographers bring to the same individual.

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Gifted Students

The following are suggestions for projects which are suitable for gifted students (some also applicable for English classes):

1. Newscasts from the past--re-creation of the news from Philadelphia in 1787

2. Letters from those attending the Constitutional Convention to friends and family expressing their feelings about what was going on in Philadelphia

3. Panel discussions, debates, etc. on the question: What if the Constitution had been written by women?

4. Re-creation of newspaper of 1787, with headlines of the day, ads, social events, etc.

5. Broadcasts from the past--for example, black people's perspective on the Constitutional Convention

6. Various forms of entertainment popular in the 18th century

7. World events in 1787, in time capsule form

8. Study of the correspondence between Abigail and John Adams during the Constitutional Convention

9. Study of the architectural styles of the 1780s

10. Collection of anecdotes about lives of the men who wrote the Constitution

11. Who's Who in 1787: Album of the personalities who shaped America

12. Creation of a game or book with questions on the Constitution

13. Creation of a booklet about the Constitution suitable for first and second graders

14. Research on the process of amendments, answering such questions as:

    a. What speeds up approval of an amendment?

    b. What is the present limit of time for approving an amendment?

    c. Why do some states take longer than others to approve an amendment?

    d. Why do some states rescind their previous position on an amendment?

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

English

1. Take an object, person, event that portrays some aspect of the American Dream--opportunities, ideals, freedom, quality of life--and write a poem, essay, or skit developing the relationship.

2. Study the Constitution of the United States as a document of the English language. Where is the language most effective? Why? Look for conciseness, parallel structure, effective word choice. What verb forms are used throughout the Constitution? Why are these forms appropriate?

3. Read the biography/autobiography of one of the shapers of the Constitution. Write an imaginary letter from him to his grandchild with regard to the Constitution.

4. Read poems such as Carl Sandburg's "Threes" and Margaret Walker's "Childhood" and explain what they reveal about dreams and reality in America.

5. Write a monologue, story, poem, or play about a person who has had a struggle of conscience in upholding or bringing to fruition the tenets of the Constitution.

6. Prepare a debate based on court cases reflecting a Constitutional tenet.

7. Analyze current media reports on an event happening in the United States and explain which parts of the Constitution are the issue.

8. Take any work of literature for class study or independent reading and discuss it in the context of the purposes of the Constitution: "to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity. . . ."

9. Provide goose quills and ink for students to sign their names on a class document. Students discuss how writing with a quill differs from writing with a fountain pen or ball point pen in ease of use, speed, and control of the instrument.

10. Several of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention left before it was over. Write an imaginative description of a delegate's thoughts and actions on the day he left.

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Science

In science class, students may participate in projects such as the following:

1. Research on the work of the major scientists during the 1780s (The names may be provided by the teacher.)

2. Panel discussions on topics related to the major scientific concerns of the 1780s

3. Science fair projects, using only materials and information that would have been available during the 1780s

4. Comparison of scientific instruments of the time with those of today (telescope, microscope, medical instruments)

5. Research to find out who was considered the "science master" in Williamsburg at the time of the signing of the Constitution. What was he doing?

6. Research to discover:

   a. What kind of science students studied in school in the 1780s

   b. Science courses offered at William and Mary during this time

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Mathematics

1. Find what math courses were taught in high school in the 1780s.
2. Study mathematical discoveries made in the 1780s.
3. Get sample math texts used in the 1780s from William and Mary and look for similarities and differences with present texts.
4. Profile famous mathematicians of the 1780s.
5. Study taxation tables of the colonial times.
6. Make a budget for the new republic.
7. Study the methods of census taking in the 1780s. Compare with methods of census taking in our time.
8. Discuss the economic effects of the Revolution and independence on England and the Colonies.
9. Measure the land mass of each of the 13 original states.
10. Examine surveying methods used in the 1780s.

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Home Economics

Home Economics students participate in projects to celebrate the Constitution such as the following:

1. Weaving fabric, spinning yarn
2. Making soap
3. Making candles
4. Drying fruits and vegetables
5. Drying flowers
6. Collecting herbs and roots for medications, cooking, and making dyes
7. Sewing clothing
8. Knitting, crocheting, tatting, quilting
9. Preserving meats (salting, smoking)
10. Making breads
11. Making jams, jellies, preserves, etc.
12. Making pomander balls

> **Pomander Balls:** For each pomander ball: 1 orange, whole cloves, powdered orris root (from the druggist), ground cinnamon, a piece of narrow ribbon. Stick whole cloves firmly into skin of orange. Work over the entire surface to avoid too much tension in one spot. Insert cloves closely with heads touching. Finish each ball within a day, before the skin starts to shrink and harden. Disregard small tears in the skin; large ones can be sewn together. Place spice mixture in large bowl; add fruits and turn until well coated. Leave balls in mixture, stirring once each day until they begin to lose the weight of the juice. To hang, thread a large-eyed needle with narrow velvet ribbon and run through the fruit about an inch from the top. *"Like It Was" Bicentennial Games 'n Fun*

13. Knitting the national symbols
14. Cross-stitching samplers popular in the 1780's

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Art

Art students may participate in the following activities which are related to life in the 1780s:

1. Tombstone rubbing in Bruton Parish graveyard
2. Carving 3-D store signs from wood
3. Constructing weather vanes
4. Candle making
5. Making samplers
6. Floor cloth painting
7. Stenciling
8. Metal tooling
9. Doing leather crafts
10. Metal piercing (Examples: lanterns, fronts for cooling cabinets)
11. Taking family portraits (traveling artists--no photographs as records)
12. Doing calligraphy
13. Making Christmas cards, wreaths, and other decorations (ornaments made from wood shavings)
14. Toy making using materials available in the 1700s (such as corn husk dolls)

THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Suggested Music List

1. An American Patriot
   by Ed Lojeski . . . . . SA
2. An American Tribute
   by Ed Lojeski . . . . . SATB
3. America, Our Heritage
   by Steele and Ades . . . . . SATB
4. America the Beautiful
   by J. S. Smith . . . . . SATB
5. Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor
   by Irving Berlin . . . . . SATB
6. God Bless America
   by Irving Berlin . . . . . SATB
7. From Sea to Shining Sea
   by Jay Althouse . . . . . SATB
8. Sing America
   by Rex Mitchell . . . . . SAB
9. Sing Out, Sweet Land
   by John Morris . . . . . SATB
10. This Is My Country
    by Jacob and Emerson . . . . . SA

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Foreign Languages

1. Make lists of words found in the Constitution that are derived from other languages.

2. Compare the United States Constitution with the Constitution of a Latin American country. Point out similarities and differences.

3. Work on translations of the preamble to the Constitution or the Bill of Rights into foreign languages (suitable for upper level classes).

4. Montesquieu's and Rousseau's writings inspired the founding fathers of our country. French students may do research on the works and thinking of these authors.

5. Research and discuss what was going on in various parts of the world in 1787 (examples: France, Spain, Italy, Russia).

PROJECTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

ROTC

Students enrolled in ROTC may do research on the following topics:

1. History of the United States flag
2. Military uniforms
3. Military support from other nations
4. Establishment of the United States Military (Militia)
5. Selection of the first President (George Washington)
6. Weapons
7. Forts and moats
8. Missions for armed services
9. Statesmen

CELEBRATING THE CONSTITUTION

Trivia Contest

Examples of Trivia Questions:

1. On what date was our present Constitution adopted?
2. Who was called the "Father of the Constitution"?
3. Who wrote the Constitution?
4. How many delegates signed the Constitution?
5. Where may the original Constitution be seen today?
6. Who was the eldest delegate to the Constitutional Convention?
7. Who were the two famous Virginians who did not attend the Constitutional Convention?
8. What was the first state to sign the Constitution?
9. What was the ninth state to sign?
10. What was the last state to sign?
11. Which state did not send delegates to the Convention?
12. Where was the Constitutional Convention held?
13. What language is the official language of the nation according to the Constitution?
14. How many bills are in the Bill of Rights?
15. How many delegates to the Constitutional Convention were signers of the Declaration of Independence?
16. Who was the youngest delegate to the Convention?

SELECTED STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berger, Raoul. *Congress v. The Supreme Court* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1969) (Paperback, New York: Bantam Books, 1973)

Bernz, Walter. *The Writing of the Constitution of the United States* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1985)

Bowen, Catherine Drinker. *Miracle in Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September 1787* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986) (Available in September 1986)

Cullop, Floyd G. *The Constitution of the United States: An Introduction* (New York: New American Library, 1984)

Diamond, Martin. *The Founding of the Democratic Republic* (Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, 1981)

Farrand, Max. *The Framing of the Constitution of the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913)

Fisher, Louis. *Politics of Shared Powers* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1981)

Friendly, Fred W. and Martha J.H. Elliot. *The Constitution, That Delicate Balance* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1984)

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*, ed. with an introduction by Clinton Rossiter (New York: New American Library, 1961) (especially Numbers 47-51)

Kelly, Alfred H., Winfred A. Harbison, and Herman Belz. *The American Constitution*, 6th edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983)

Lee, Rex. *A Lawyer Looks at the Constitution* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1981).

McDowell, Gary L., ed., *Taking the Constitution Seriously* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1981) (see especially pp. 193-253; essays by Paul Peterson, Edward S. Corwin, L. Peter Schultz, and Sotirios A. Barber, and the speech by Abraham Lincoln)

McIlwain, C.H. *Constitutionalism, Ancient and Modern* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958)

Pyle, Christopher H. and Richard M. Pious. *The President, Congress, and the Constitution* (New York: The Free Press, 1984)

Rodell, Fred. *55 Men: The Story of the Constitution* with an introduction by Charles Allan Wright (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1986)

Rossiter, Clinton. *1787: The Grand Convention* (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1966)

Storing, Herbert J. *What the Antifederalists were FOR* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984)

Vile, M.J.C. *Constitutionalism and the Separation of Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967)

■ There are, of course, many other titles which would be very useful to consult. We also recommend a good, basic U.S. government textbook and constitutional casebook.